



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Date: August 16, 2023.

Time: 7:15 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes

Attendees:

- Executive Committee: Christopher Tonkin., Muris Kobaslija., Jack Johnson., Doug Mayo-Wells., Scott Smith.
- Town of Arlington: John Alessi., Officer Shailesh Shah.

1. Greetings and introductions, ground rules for online meetings.

Christopher Tonkin notifies attendees that Doug Mayo-Wells is taking minutes; the meeting is being recorded for the purposes of verifying the minutes; and the recording will be deleted after the minutes are approved. Tonkin confirms the committee members and others in attendance for the meeting.

2. Approval of outstanding meeting from previous meetings.

Committee Secretary Doug Mayo-Wells is unable to attend tonight's meeting, so no previous minutes to approve.

3. Report from COBWEB Officer.

Officer Shah was unable to participate due to technical issue.

4. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Report.

August TAC meeting was canceled.

5. Town Day.

TAC materials for town day (tent, easel), are in the planning department. Christopher Tonkin has the banners.

ABAC will finalize agenda for covering the booth at the September 20 meeting.

Bluebikes will not give away free passes, but ABAC can buy and distribute them; Bluebikes will waive the fee for a demo bike to be available throughout Town Day.

ABAC voted to authorize the expenditure of up to \$200 for up to 20 “adventure passes” to be distributed at Town Day. Proposed by Doug Mayo-Wells, seconded by Muris Kobaslija, carried unanimously.

Action item: John Alessi will purchase the passes on behalf of ABAC.

6. State of the rail trail in East Arlington.

An email received from Jeff Roth mentions dangerous patches, root heaves, especially between Lake and Linwood streets. Committee members have also noted bumps between Arlington Center and the Lexington border (some spray painted), as well as encroaching vegetation between Thorndike/Lake and at the Lexington border. Although short-term fixes are helpful, it would be better to have long term solutions (e.g., root guards).

John Alessi suggests reaching out to DPW Director Rademacher and/or using the Town Request/Answer Center, would be beneficial to have trail repair included in capital requests for next FY.

Christopher Tonkin has been advised that Lexington is planning to repave large sections of the bikeway.

Scott Smith notes that new access board standards are in effect for shared-use paths, which could make the Minuteman non-compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Possible short-term remediation to prioritize:

- Root heave damage in Arlington Heights and near Water St.
- Root heave damage near Spy Pond condos
- Undermining of path near Gold’s Gym
- Repainting the pavement markings by Trader Joe’s
- Repaint center line

Action item: Doug Mayo-Wells will document areas which need repair, and share draft with Jack Johnson and Scott Smith.

Action item: John Alessi will review the capital planning process with the Town Manager’s office.

7. Pleasant Steet bike accommodations.

Correspondence from Jeff Roth raises concern about Pleasant Street between Town Center and Belmont. John Alessi advises that it is a state road, but

owned by the Town. There may be upcoming water main work which would involve repaving. Marking egregious potholes would be helpful.

8. Medford Street Bike Lane update.

The Select Board approved the proposal with a 5-0 vote.

9. ABAC Budget spending.

Action item: Christopher Tonkin will contact Galen Mook (MassBike) and request that he respond to John Alessi's correspondence.

10. Tri-town meeting agenda and possible dates.

Mark Bailey is no longer chair of Bedford Bicycle Committee (now serving on the Finance Committee). New chair has not been announced.

Betty Gau (Lexington BAC Chair) has proposed agenda items for discussing new signage, and a request for the Lexington committee to advise the Lexington Select Board on e-bike policy

Scott Smith noted that past ABAC discussions were supportive of class 1 and class 2 ebikes (pedal and throttle-assisted with maximum assisted speed of 20mph). A 15mph speed limit has been discussed.

Jack Johnson notes that unpowered bikes can reach the same maximum speeds, although ebikes tend to be heavier. He requests an update on the Bedford extension project be added to the agenda.

John Alessi suggests adding a review of capital improvement plans and grant applications to the agenda.

The meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 25 and will be conducted in hybrid mode.

11. Fall bike tour.

A tentative date of October 22 is suggested.

Possible theme: Ride from Great meadows to Alewife and review native/invasive plant species visible along the Minuteman.

12. Planning Department Updates.

John Alessi reviews an analysis of Blue Bikes data.

- 29% of trips start in Arlington and end at an MBTA Red Line station (Alewife, Davis Sq, Porter Sq) – suggests residents used BlueBikes as first/last mile transit solution
- 33% of trips start and end in Arlington. Nearly 2/3 of these end at the starting station – suggest residents use BlueBikes for recreation as well as to get around Town
- Most common trips originating in Arlington:
 - Railroad lot/Railroad lot (1,894)
 - Linwood St/Alewife (1,619)
 - Linwood St/Linwood St (1,282)
 - Thorndike Field/Thorndike Field (820)

Muris Kobaslija mentions that BlueBikes often are not available for peak commute times either because stations are empty, or because stations are completely full. BlueBikes addresses this with a valet service for some high volume stations/times.

John Alessi mentions that a West Medford station will be added soon, creating another connection to Arlington.

John Alessi reviews data from the automated counter on the bikeway near Swan Place.

Battery and technical problems make year/year comparison somewhat difficult, but in May/June/July counts were higher than the same period in 2021 (and much higher than in 2020) but lower than in 2022.

Muris Kobaslija suggests correlating weather data with trail usage.

Town held a kickoff meeting with DCR to present the Mystic River path connection plan. Scope of work will be developed shortly. DCR will also likely do short-term (pavement marking) improvements at the rotary this winter.

The planning department will present to the Select Board on September 11 on Mass Ave/Appleton conceptual design update and will be meeting with business owners in advance of that. The design will be released to the community following the Select Board presentation.

Christopher Tonkin suggests that parents might be helpful in voicing support for the plan.

ABAC voted to send a memorandum of support for the proposed plan (which the committee expects to be bike- and pedestrian-friendly) to the Select Board. Proposed by Jack Johnson, seconded by Christopher Tonkin, carried unanimously.

13. Any other business.

Correspondence received from ADA Coordinator Tim Ross re: request from the Disability Commission for long term bike storage that can accommodate adaptive bicycles so people are not dependent on transport of their equipment every time they want to use the trail. The Recreation Center/Hill's Hill near Ryder street has been proposed as a location.

The Committee is supportive of this initiative but has some concerns around logistics (access control, protecting bikes from weather) and physical security.

John Alessi says that this would be a pilot program operated by the Department of Health and Human Services, which would manage registration and access.

Muris Kobaslija mentions the resurfacing/installation of separated bike lanes on Hampshire St in Cambridge.

Scott Smith will chair the September meeting in Christopher Tonkin's absence.

14. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.